



Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

"We have a huge responsibility, and that [is] to defend America while protecting our great liberties."
President George W. Bush, November 2001

"To suggest that there is a trade-off between security and individual freedoms--that we must discard one for protection for the other--is a false choice. We will not, as Ben Franklin once warned, trade our essential liberties to purchase temporary safety." *Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge, July 21, 2003*

Mission Statement

The mission of the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties is to protect civil rights and civil liberties and to support homeland security by providing the Department with constructive legal and policy advice on the full range of civil rights and civil liberties issues the Department will face, and by serving as an information and communication channel with the public regarding all aspects of these issues. [Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Strategic Plan](#), September 2003 (PDF, 5 pages - 124 KB)

The Office was created by Congress to review and assess allegations of abuse of civil rights or civil liberties, racial or ethnic profiling, by Department of Homeland Security Personnel. The Office is required to report annually to Congress on any such abuses committed by DHS personnel, how much money was required to resolve such complaints, and how such complaints were resolved.

Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties: Reporting Comments and Concerns

Section 705 of the Homeland Security Act, 6 United States Code § 345, establishes the [Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties](#) to review and assess information or allegations of abuse alleging a violation of civil rights or civil liberties, or racial or ethnic profiling.

If you report a complaint to this Office, Homeland Security will review and assess the information, and then take appropriate action to resolve the complaint.

This Office will resolve many complaints, but some complaints may be forwarded to other Department components, or to other government agencies such as the Department of Justice, if appropriate.

Regardless of how your complaint is resolved, it will be carefully reviewed and resolved in accordance with applicable laws and policies.

Filing a Complaint

You may choose to report your complaint directly to the agency involved.

- If your complaint involves baggage problems or questions about what can be carried on a flight, you can report it directly to the Transportation Security Agency
<http://www.tsa.gov/public/contactus>
- If your complaint involves a pattern of misconduct or criminal misconduct, fraud waste or abuse, or misconduct involving a high ranking government employee (Grade GS-15 or above) you can [report it to the DHS Inspector General](#).
- [Report a complaint](#) to the Department of Homeland Security, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

News and Reports

- **Executive Order: Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness**, July 22, 2004
[Read Executive Order](#) (PDF, 2 pages - 72 KB)
[Read Department of Homeland Security Press Release](#)
[Read White House Press Release](#) (PDF, 1 page - 77 KB)
- **Report to Congress on Implementation of Section 705 of the Homeland Security Act and the Establishment of the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties**, June 2004
[Read Report](#), (PDF, 51 pages - 8 MB)

More Information About the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

- [About the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties](#) Learn about the leadership and organization.
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Privacy Statement](#) There are additional specific privacy policies regarding information for the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties pages, in addition to the general [privacy policy of the Department of Homeland Security Web site](#).

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